Indian Ink

by

C. W. Waddington

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WRITTEN IN EXILE

BY

C. W. WADDINGTON, C.I.E.

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TO

F. C. O. B.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF OLD DAYS

PRELUDE

THE greater number of these occasional Poems have appeared at intervals in the 'Times of India' over the *nom-de-plume* 'Byronides,' and I desire to express my gratitude to the proprietors of that journal for their courteous permission to republish them.

If there are any sojourners in the East whose tedious leisure has been beguiled for a moment by such verses, and who now think them worthy to be resuscitated, I shall be rewarded beyond expectation.

C. W. W.

CRAIGWEIL,
ALDWICK:
October 1908.

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DON JUAN UP TO DATE

My friends and countrymen, I've got no hero,
Of this or any other age or clime,
As bold as Ajax, or as base as Nero;
I must admit the blunder, or the crime;
But still my motto is 'Dum spiro, spero,'
And so I trust you'll read my random rhyme;—
Or if my aspirations vainly flatter,
We'll part good friends at least, and so no matter.

But ye who venture, whether right or wrong,
To read, mark, learn, and eke digest my lay,

Who've got a taste for sober, serious song,
I can assure you that it will repay ;
Or, at the worst, it is not very long,
Because I've really nothing much to say ;
Besides, I'm but a 'prentice kind of poet,
Which if you doubt, my rhymes will clearly show it.

I've no pretensions to the epic laurel,
My Pegasus is rather short in stride ;
With nobler bards I would not pick a quarrel,
And humbly leave them to their fame and pride ;
But still my modest tale contains a moral,
By which you all may be much edified,
And so my Muse shall tell you what she knows
In simple, homely verse, next door to prose.

My Muse untutored cannot mouth with ease ;
She is an unsophisticated maid ;
I'll follow her example, if you please,
According to a maxim of the trade
That honesty with policy agrees,
And in my rhymes you'll find a spade's a spade ;
The sea's the sea, and not 'the foaming main,'
A fool a fool, and not 'a lovesick swain.'

A wife's a wife, and not 'a faithful spouse,'—
I beg the sex's pardon, if I should,
But no offence is meant to nuptial vows,
My story soon will make this statement good ;
I do my best to give the 'why's' and 'how's,'
And hope I shall not be misunderstood ;
Above all vices worthy of damnation
I most abominate insinuation.

I like a bluff, bold, manly kind of fellow,
Who speaks his mind, both in and out of season,
Who greets you with 'You're looking rather yellow,'
For which there sometimes is sufficient reason,
Particularly when the night's been mellow ;—
The ladies too, (I'm sure this is no treason)
At least all those who've kept the bloom of youth,
Like to be told the honest, downright truth.

And so I'll tell it them, the lovely dears ;
Their charms are legion, virtues quite as many,
Alike enchanting in their smiles and tears ;
I'll lay my choicest lovelock to a penny
They never cause their lords one moment's fears,
Or if they do, I'm sure I've not met any ;—
So now I've made my peace with *them* again,
I may proceed to safely damn the men.

I hate all Viceroys, Governors, and such,
All High Court Judges, howsoever sage,
All Humbugs, whether English, French, or Dutch,
Who strut in borrowed plumes upon the stage;
Perhaps my curses will not harm them much,
Considering that the prayer-book's foremost page
Beseeches Heaven to bless them, as we do
On Sundays, and of course on weekdays too.

I hate Commissions, as I hate a Bore;
The last on Opium was a trifle lame;
Our noble friends at home who make the law
Are blessed with a peculiar sense of shame,
And keep the nation's virtues to the fore
By pointing out where others are to blame;
I wonder how the British lord, or lackey,
Would like a stoppage on his beer and 'baccy!

I do detest the vanishing rupee ;
But hope it will not vanish altogether,
For if it does, I really do not see
What we shall do for clothing or shoe leather ;
The times are changed from what they used to be,
(But that remark's as trite as is the weather)
Old maxims, too, no longer hold their sway ;—
Exchange *is* robbery, whate'er they say.

I've no great fancy for the income-tax,
Especially when paid on 'Compensation' ;
I deprecate all morals that are lax,
And so to obviate the like temptation
To mortal flesh, which is as melting wax,
According to my frequent observation,
I don't approve of moonlight walks or rides,
Or billet-doux—and Heaven knows what besides.

You'll think there is no end to my aversions,
And beg me to cut short my good advice;
I fear you'll disregard my wise assertions,
Although, like pearls, they are beyond all price;
And therefore, like the ancient Medes and Persians,
I'll sum my moral creed up in a trice;—
If you desire my hearty approbation,
Avoid all lying, stealing, and flirtation.

All these are practices most reprehensible,
And several other things we're best without
Are quite eschewed by people who are sensible,
As lobster-salad, trifle, bottled stout;
But that which is the least of all defensible,—
Fond husbands, anxious mothers, bear me out,—

In wilful wives, or bread-and-butter misses,
Is giving, taking, or exchanging kisses.

This brings me to my story. O the days,
The days of youth, but mine, alas, no more,
When Nature seemed a song of prayer and praise!
Perhaps you may have heard that line before;—
Methinks I've somewhere read another phrase
Concerning 'Nature red in tooth and claw,'
When little creatures are the big ones' food;—
But all depends upon the poet's mood.

So now I say, all Nature was a song;
We'll waive the question of the teeth and claws,
Because I fear 'twould occupy us long,
Since wisest brains have failed to show the cause.

I beg you'll contradict me when I'm wrong,
And now proceed without a further pause
The history of my heroine relating ;
'Tis not polite to keep a lady waiting.

I said I had a hero. Fairness claims
That I should introduce my heroine too.
My hero's patronymic shall be James,—
As well as any other, this will do ;
It is not always wise to mention names,
Besides, this story's perfectly untrue,
Unless—but this is most improbable—you happen
To come across a pair to fit the cap on.

My heroine was called—but let that pass—
Enough that she was virtuous and fair,
Was not too fond of looking in the glass,
A merit, join'd with beauty, somewhat rare ;

Her eyes were—but 'twould be the merest farce
To try to picture you her eyes, or hair ;
She had a husband, who possessed her heart,
But owned a weakness for the healing art.

My hero, James, belonged to that profession,
Renowned for breaking hearts and saving lives ;
A curious fact, which came to my possession
By observation both of maids and wives ;
I'm confident—pray pardon this digression—
You'll see its value when the time arrives,—
That e'en if Æsculapius saved a few,
He must have been a lady-killer too.

Merchants are men of wealth, and that has charms ;
The lawyer's honesty deserves our praise ;

There's something to attract in well-stocked farms,
Though Irish agriculture hardly pays;
A curate's life is free from war's alarms;
Sailors, I'm told, have most engaging ways;
Than British soldiers no one less afraid is,
But doctors are more popular with ladies.

My time is short, my tale is scarce begun,
Explaining this would cost a deal of trouble,
Like showing how the earth goes round the sun,
And sometimes also why the moon looks double;
To quote examples is too often done,
A tiresome task, as empty as a bubble;
Myself, if fickle Memory does not cozen,
Could well recount to you at least a dozen.

O Memory! Thine is the magic lamp
That summons up whate'er we fain would see,
That brings the light to dungeon dark and damp,
And cheers the exiled heart which clings to thee,
That earth-worn captives from the iron clamp
Of custom and the weight of years doth free;
Attend! Thou Spirit of the mind, obey,
Breathe o'er my soul, and chase the mists away!

Recall the hours, the wingéd hours of bliss,
That swift as homing birds have fled before;
Recall young love's first, tender, passionate kiss,
The spell that bound us, but can bind no more;
Hope's radiant visions, which long since we miss,
The syrens who beguiled us to their shore,

Our youth's enchanted garden, where we strayed,
And gazed on goddesses 'neath every shade.

Mnemósyne! Thou art a goddess, too,
The saddest still that visits mortal sight;
How often dost thou steal upon my view,
Thy face half hidden 'neath the veil of night,
Thy brow all pale with grief for ever new,
Dim eyes that seek, but cannot find, the light,
Faint hands outstretched to reach a bygone while,
And lips that tremble even when they smile!

James and his goddess sat, a blissful pair,
Upon a dogcart, as is now the fashion;
Her eyes were bright, her spirits light as air,
She'd got an exquisitely pretty sash on;

His heart was like a schoolboy's at a fair,
Or like a coster's when he's got a 'mash' on ;—
A vulgar term, unsuited to my Muse,
But poets cannot always pick and choose.

How close they were, I can't pretend to say,
Upon their privacy we won't intrude ;
'Tis bad to be *de trop* in any way,
To spoil a *tête-à-tête* is downright rude ;
But using inference, if so I may,
By logical deduction I conclude
That they were close enough—it must be said—
To make the gallant doctor lose his head.

Saint Anthony, in the holy, ancient tale,
Was wont to keep a bed of snow for use
Whene'er the flesh seemed likely to prevail ;
But James's conduct was without excuse,

His resolutions proved so very frail,
Nor can we deem it may his guilt reduce
That here, if e'er forbidden fruits entice,
We've got no snow to put a check on vice.

Proximity ! Thou art the very deuce !
Expression rather strong my feeling needs ;
I can't help quoting, though I seem abstruse,
'How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill deeds done.' But do not here deduce ;
A seeming-apt quotation oft misleads,
And this one is not really *à propos*,
Because the lady had no need of snow.

She ordered James to sever his connection,
Of course without the ghost of an embrace ;
He underwent a kind of vivisection,
So cutting were her words, and from her face

He learned his crime was of the worst complexion.
She banished him forthwith in deep disgrace,
And later—this to wives I recommend—
She told her husband all about her friend.

I can't enough commend her strict propriety,
A virtue sadly wanting here of late,
Her candour, caution, judgment, and sobriety,
Which must endear her greatly to her mate;
The matter now is one of notoriety
That, spite of efforts to improve my state,
I still drag on a wretched single life,
But pray that Heaven may send me such a wife.

I wish I was a Turk, to marry four!
My happiness would be increased fourfold;
A simple calculation shows, the more
You have, the better, as with bags of gold;

I'd never be obliged to lock the door,
Though they were not the least decayed, or old;
If I were only certain of my pension,
I'd start to-morrow—where, I need not mention.

The husband was a man of moderation;
I'd wish to find his like in every foe;
Without a trace of wrath or indignation
He spoke no hasty word, nor struck a blow;
Desiring only James's reformation,
Extremely anxious that no blood should flow,
In candour, too, no whit his wife's inferior,
He just reported James to his superior.

I can't find words to laud his magnanimity,
His calmness under fearful provocation,
Forbearance, self-control, and equanimity;
'Tis very rare in any rank or station

To find such paragons in close proximity
Alike insensible to all temptation ;
Virtues like theirs on earth are highly prized ;
I doubt not they will both be canonized.

But for Don James I've not the slightest pity ;
I further state, I can't abide the jokes
Of stupid people striving to be witty
By poking fun at sober married folks ;—
The humour of a comic coster's ditty—
'Tis on a level with a vulgar hoax,
To true morality most deleterious ;
I beg you won't suppose I am not serious.

Don James's case was tried without delay,
But yet without indecent haste or fury,
They sent him to perdition, that's to say,
Without a counsel, witness, judge, or jury.

'Twas prompt and expeditious, like the way
They execute the villain at old Drury ;
The gods, and eke the pit, rejoice to find
That Justice does not always lag behind.

There is no doubt we are a moral nation ;
'Tis greatly owing to our good democracy,
And also to the rigid reformation
Displayed of late by all our aristocracy ;
But that which chiefly claims our veneration
Is what we'll style our Exeter-Hall-ocracy ;
Don Juans have existed since the Flood,
But nowadays we nip them in the bud.

I greatly fear my tale is nipped as well,
And so will take my leave, with your permission,

Although I wish that there were more to tell.
My rhyming fills me with profound contrition,
But still the moral makes my bosom swell,
'Tis such as will improve your soul's condition,
And raise you far above Don James's level,
Whose virtuous friends consigned him to the devil.

They clasped each other close, that saintly pair;
We leave them in a conjugal embrace;
Meanwhile poor James was verging on despair,
Confronted thus by ruin and disgrace;
'Tis time to leave him, too, you'll all declare,
He's lost his reputation and his place,
And, till his footing gets a little stronger,
We can associate with him no longer.

Alas! How fleeting are all human ties!
We love to-day where we may loathe to-morrow,
And, as the wheel of fickle Fortune flies,
Now lend to those from whom full soon we borrow.
Life is but change, Hereafter but surmise,
And Ignorance is but our crown of sorrow;
There's nothing certain, said the sage sardonic,
And least of all that love miscalled Platonic.

To cease to sing is worst of poet's woes;
But yet, my readers, it may well appear
That you would crave from me some slight repose;
Glad is the pilgrim when the haven's near;
The sermon's, or the curtain-lecture's close
Is welcome to the sinner's wearied ear;
Since Friendship is so fleeting, yield to Fate,
And let us part, before perchance we hate!

Yet one more moral, ere my story ends,
(Of others you'll discover not a few)
Don't drive in dogcarts with your lady friends,
And never ask for kisses, if you do.
For one false step 'tis vain to make amends ;
Farewell to James, farewell, my readers, too ;
I fain would linger with you,—yet, farewell,—
And envy those who do not kiss—but tell.

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TO THE LAUREL

NYMPH thou wast, until the God
Changed thee to a matchless tree,
To grace the soil thy feet had trod
With more divinity.
The Olive and the Myrtle fair,
Thy sister plants of Love and Peace,
Fragrant beside thee filled the air,
The hallow'd air of Greece.

Thou the meed of victor's brow
Where the high triumphal car
With brazen wheel and gilded prow
Displayed the spoils of war ;

Or where the bard's melodious rage,
Enkindled at the eternal shrine,
Inspired of old the listening sage
With madness all divine.

Thee the Sun-god, bard and seer,
Gave to guard his altar's pale,
Where by Castalia's fountain clear
The cliffs o'erhang the vale;
Where heaven-illumined embers kept
The flame that age to age supplies;
Around in bronze and marble slept
A thousand effigies.

From the Hyampeian steep
Hear the swelling trumpets peal,
Till o'er the far Crissaean deep
The echoes faintly steal!

Through pillar'd court and colonnade
The solemn chanting softly winds,
And in the green encircling glade
Responsive murmur finds.

Lo! The snowy-cinctured band
Round the bleeding victim go,
With wreathéd staff, and burning brand,
And censer swinging slow;
They pace by many a statue tall,
By many a gift of Eastern kings,
By sculptured frieze, and pictured wall,
And strange emblazonings.

Lustral water sprinkle now
From the golden fonts around!
Let laurel bind the favoured brow
That enters holy ground!

Again uplift the trumpet's blast
To hail the God's attentive sign !
The pilgrim stands alone, aghast,
Before the inmost shrine.

Back the burnish'd gates are rolled ;
Louder yet the trumpets bray ;
The yawning rocks their depths unfold ;
The quivering lightnings play ;
The thunder rolls, the skies are rent,
The laurels nod, the tripod reels,
The gulf in smoke and vapour blent
A fearful form reveals.

Fast and faster beats his heart ;
Dizzy, mazed, he scarce can hear
The priestess on her throne apart,
In mystery and fear,

With lips that foam, and eyes that flame,
And fever'd limbs to frenzy given,
In accents dark and dread proclaim
The high decrees of Heaven.

Long hath ceased that ancient spell,
Long by Delphi's ruin'd shrine,
By lonely cliff, and vacant cell,
The echoes dumbly pine;
No more beside their fountain fair
The Muses chant at sunset hour;
No more the riven rocks declare
The God's prophetic power.

Far from that forsaken fire
Strays Apollo, bard and seer;
Yet still 'tis thine to wreathe the lyre,
To deck the hero's bier;

The serried host of stars that wheel
In endless march across the sky
Shall falter ere thy garlands feel
Time's fatal enmity.

Me no wreath of bay shall bless,
Pluck'd from off thy deathless boughs;
No fire divine my lips confess,
The guerdon of my vows;—
Yet mine the inward bliss to feel
That happier tongues perchance may stir,
And in those awful courts to kneel
The humblest worshipper.

ODE TO MEMORY

Most sovereign Goddess, whose ennobling power
Uplifted Man from out his brutish birth,
Thou for Man's guidance still from hour to hour
Kindlest thy beacon o'er the wastes of earth;
Great Mother of the Muses nine,
A beauty more divinely bright
Than all thy daughters fair is thine!
Thou dost enchant the illumined soul
With pictured stores of rare delight;
By thee, where'er the trackless waters roll,
The sailor steers his bark from pole to distant pole.

What clouds of thunder wreathe thy judgment bar,
When self-accusing Crime before thee stands
To meet the doom that tracks him from afar!
The shadowy minions of thy stern commands,
Remorse, and all his ghostly crew,
The Phantoms of the Past, arise
To wreak the curse of vengeance due.
Behold the wretch they thirst to slay,
His frozen lips, his staring eyes!
The Vulture-Furies own thy ruthless sway,
And rend with beak and claw their unresisting prey.

But far from felon guilt and frenzied cry
Sweet Innocence obeys thy mild command;
Content in yon sequester'd nook to lie,
Thou dost not deign to lead thy pensive band

With Revel's train to speed the hours ;
The voice of Glee and vain Delight
Is heard not in thy tranquil bowers ;
No friend to Fancy crimson-hued
Is he who worships thee aright ;
Afar from Mirth and all her glittering brood,
He loves to walk with thee in blissful solitude.

Within thy quiet courts the cypress grows,
The pansy at thy feet, and all around
If aught among the flowers of Heaven bestows
A breath more soft and fragrant, here 'tis found ;
Here Silence dwells, and calm Content
With folded hands doth muse apart ;
And here, to those whose youth is spent,

The magic mirror by thy side
Displays with inexpressive art
Such scenes as o'er the charméd spirit glide
More fair than Hope can show with all her boasted pride.

To me full oft at evening's sacred hour
Thy summons came, with thee once more to roam
My native fields, led by thy mystic power,
And hear the wished-for greetings of my home.
Now is thy voice the echoing horn,
And now the huntsman's ringing cry,
Now 'tis the lark at early dawn,
And now, more sweet than aught hath been,
Steals on my soul Love's whisper'd sigh,

And eyes, more tender through the mists between,
Like midnight stars that sleep in some still lake, are seen.

And when the festal lights of life are low,
And Hope and Health are from the banquet fled,
No solace shall my spirit need to know,
So thou be near to raise my drooping head.
O, let my life so ordered be,
Most awful goddess, that thy face
May wear no parting frown for me,
But that serene and solemn light
Which gives to Death its only grace;
May'st thou revive with bygone visions bright
My faint and fearful soul in that tempestuous night!

TIME AND DEATH

WHEN sinks the sun beneath the western wave,
And spreads the twilight o'er the dusky skies,
We watch the day descend into the grave
Which gives not up its dead, though ghosts may rise
To mock us, phantom wrecks we may not save
From out the Past, whose depth unfathomed lies
Awaiting all—Ambition, Hate, and Strife,
And Love, alike the crown and curse of life.

We do not add, by living, to our store
Of joys that Wisdom bids us to forget;

Even in the tasting Pleasure is no more,
And Memory is sister to Regret;
The heart that once hath felt will own no law
To measure Time by suns that rise and set;
'Tis but intensity of joys and fears
That makes a life. Some moments count for years.

Why keep the garland wither'd of its grace?
Why linger till the leaf be dry and sere
Upon the bough? Come, Death, with stealthy pace,
Or fiery foot, regarding sigh nor tear;
Come thou with kindly smile upon thy face,
Or frowning in thy panoply of fear,—
It matters not when thou and I may meet,—
Come, Death, when Life has something still of sweet!

ON THE GHATS

Not a breath to stir the leaves, not a rustle in the eaves,
Not a ripple on the waters of the steely mountain lake ;
Not a cry of beast or bird in the silent forest heard,
Not a spirit, as I ween, of the earth or sky awake !

Not a cloud that floats or flies in the burning, brazen skies ;
All the winds that lie enchained in their cave are still as death ;

And the mountains at their post, like a grim
and sleepless host,
Through the slow and sultry hours of the
noonday hold their breath.

But mark ! On yonder hill, like a lion sleeping
still,
How that purple cloud o'erhangs, how it
darkly glooms and lowers !
And listen ! like the sound of an earthquake
underground,
The distant voice of thunder tolls a knell to
wake the hours.

There's a stir among the leaves, there's a rustle
in the eaves,
And a sweeping shiver passes o'er the bosom
of the lake ;

Not a cry of beast or bird in the frighten'd
forest heard,
But the Spirit of the storm and his legions are
awake.

Now the skies are overcast, and the winds are
loose at last,
And a thick and murky pall is drawn athwart
the sun,
And the twisted branches sway with the fitful
gusts at play,
And the big and heavy drops fall slowly one
by one.

And now there bellows forth, like the tiger in
his wrath,
A roar that peals and echoes all along the
shuddering sky,

And through the cloven cloud, on the forest bent and bow'd,
Strikes the flaming sword of Heaven from the surging strife on high.

As the charging squadrons come, with the trumpet and the drum,
All the floods of Heaven are loosed on the mountain and the plain ;
And the tawny-maned cascades through the sounding valley-glades
Go rushing like a steed that has never felt the rein.

Lo ! a huge and misty form, that comes riding o'er the storm,
How he rallies to the fight every demon of the flood !

'Tis the Spirit of the Blast, on his courser fierce and fast,
And his ringing cry of battle, how it pulses through my blood !

Oh, to ride, for ever ride, on that phantom steed astride,
Like a cloud of morning borne over rocks and stormy waves,
Over frozen peaks of snow, where the icy whirlwinds blow,
To the Islands of the West that my weary spirit craves !

Oh, to ride, for ever ride, on that tameless steed astride,
From the Self that masters earth, from the death in life below !

But the Spirit wild and free, he has turned him now to flee,
And his laughter seems to mock me as his courser wheels to go.

For the storm has pass'd and fled, and the forest lifts its head,
And faint and still more faintly sounds the clarion of the blast;
See, the sunlight strikes again on the mountain and the plain,
And the distant thunder mutters like a lion dying fast.

In the breeze the branches sway, and the rippling waters play,
But my spirit with the Spirit of the storm is fain to flee;

And beast and bird rejoice with the forest's
myriad voice,—
But the calm of earth and sky will it e'er
return to me?

DEATH'S GARLAND

To Death I dedicate my vows,
If aught avail our vows and tears
To stubborn Death, that stops his ears,
And plucks to wreathe his dusky brows

The lily pale, the violet rare,
The rose that with the sun is born
And scarcely blooms a summer morn,
And all that is most sweet and fair.

Among the countless pleading throng
Before his altar-steps astir,
I come, a frail petitioner,
To place a worthless gift of song.

Unmoved by frenzied grief I call ;
No wild unreason stirs my blood ;
But on my spirit's silent flood
The stillness of despair doth fall.

O Death, a simple boon I pray ;
Thou hast not found a foe in me,
And I have never railed on thee ;
I ask thee not thy hand to stay ;

I ask thee not to spare the flowers
Thou lovest, though I love them too,—
I love them, and they are but few,—
Go, snatch them from the weeping Hours,

The starry blooms that crown the mead,
The lily, rose, and violet ;
But leave me not to linger yet,
And in thy garland place a weed.

SONNET

LIFE has full many an hour of bitter breath,
When depths unfathomed of despair and hate
Engulf the soul, the scorn of grinning Fate,
And Earth is but the charnel-house of Death ;

No longer light of Hope illumineth
The dungeon where we languish soon and late,
And desperate Reason mocks our maddening state ;—
Then have I turned to lean on One that saith,

'No single hour by its sole self is weighed,
But linked with those behind and those before;
The Past is thine, and see before thee laid
The Future with its myriad-teeming store,
Like stars within the boundless vault display'd,
Or waves that dimple countless from the shore.'

TO CYNTHIA

On having her photograph taken for the first time

'Mid the cushions' soft recess,
Soothed by many a fond caress,
See the little maid serene
Smiling like a conscious queen !
Tiny limbs in dainty pose,
Baby fingers, baby toes,
Laughing lips, and dimple sweet,
Eyes, where Joy and Wonder meet,—
Damsel to such graces born
Was not made to live forlorn.
Now, methinks, I see her stand
Blithest of a lightsome band,

Weaving flowers in childish glee,
Chaplets not so bright as she ;
Dancing 'neath the woodland screen,
(Sweeter Dryad ne'er was seen)—
Now more stately, tall, and fair,
With step sedate and banded hair,
Hearing lover's whisper tell
Tale her heart has told her well.
Stay ! Enough of vain surmise,
Lest a darker phantom rise !
Who shall give to Life a date,
Or spell the dim decrees of Fate ?
Rather let me breathe a prayer,
Blessing thee from every snare,
While unconscious thou dost rest,
Baby, in thy pillow'd nest.
From thy cradle harsh Reproof,
Pain, and Sorrow, stand aloof !

May thy happy playmates be
Buxom Health, and harmless Glee,
Best of all, Simplicity !
Days be thine of sweet content,
Happiness with duty blent ;
Store of wealth I wish thee not ;
Love requited be thy lot,
And never on thy peace intrude
Sting of Man's ingratitude !—
Stay once more ! Those drooping eyes
Heed not my soliloquies.
Baby, sleep, and on thee steal
Dreams thou never shalt reveal,
Dreams of innocence and bliss
Such as elder mortals miss,
Dreams to wiser hearts denied,
Wise in selfishness and pride ;—
Hearts how fain, alas, to change

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For that childish slumber sweet
Every vision sad and strange
Brought by Time's unresting feet !—

Morning rosebud, tender, pure !
While the morning dews endure,
Ere the breeze of morning dies,
And the smile from out the skies,
Ere the noonday heats prevail,
If thy petals, faint and frail,
Close in one unending sleep,—
Surely none would dare to weep !

AD AMICOS

YONDER Moon, whose silver light
  Makes the stars no longer seen,
'Tis but on a nearer sight
  That she seems to shine a queen ;
Many an orb those deeps do hide
Would eclipse her pomp and pride.

See the Rose, by morn bedew'd,
  Fann'd by Zephyrs young and gay ;
Though the noon's embraces rude
  Wither all her charms away,
Yet to-morrow's dew shall fill
Roses fresher, lovelier still.

When the Thrush, that all day long
Watching o'er her leafy nest
Filled the listening grove with song,
Silent sinks at length to rest,
Philomel her want supplies
With diviner ecstasies.

When the Year has reached his prime,
Cruel Winter chills his breath ;
Though we weep the ruin'd time,
'Tis a brief, a seeming death ;
Soon the Spring, with splendour new,
Decks the earth in varied hue.

Golden Hours of pure delight,
Swift on silken wings ye fly !

Yet 'tis vain to mark your flight,
  Gazing still with backward eye;
Lock'd within the bars of Fate
Others sweet as ye do wait.

BEAUTY'S EYES

HER eyes are the mist of the morning,
When the night has been still,
And the earliest flush of the dawning
Rises over the hill.
Though the field and the woodland and river
On Earth's bosom slept,
They would answer and tremble and quiver,
If she wept.

Her eyes are the starlight of even,
When the Moon is away,
And Mystery reigns in the heaven
In her mantle of gray.

Though the spheres were with sorrow o'erladen,
By the Ages defiled,
Yet their song would respond to the Maiden,
If she smiled.

LAUDABUNT ALII

The huntsman, with the dawn astir,
Doth stoutly to his soul aver,
For him the steed that needs no spur,
  For him the headlong pace,
The freshness of the misty morn,
And o'er the dewy uplands borne
The echoes of the ringing horn,
  The glories of the chase.

The rover loves from land of snow
To where the palm and myrtle grow
To steer, howe'er the tempest blow,
  The good ship plunging free ;

To him the billows' surging swell
Makes music like a marriage bell,
To him more sweet than tongue can tell
The savour of the sea.

The soldier's breast with bliss doth fill,
When war's alarms his pulses thrill,
And Danger hails the hero still
To play his stirring part;
The trumpet's call, the charger's neigh,
To him no sound as sweet as they,
And Carnage holds her sombre sway
The mistress of his heart.

The statesman, self-contained and proud,
To strife and stern ambition vow'd,
Contemns and woos the fickle crowd,
To win a blazon'd name;

For him doth Glory's beacon light
The rugged path, the toilsome height,
That well may meaner souls affright,
The steep ascent of Fame.

The scholar pores with rapture deep
On tomes which garner'd wisdom keep
Of minds that now for ever sleep,
That naught can now estrange ;
No solace does he seek or find
But what the Past has left behind,
And gives his unimprison'd mind
Through Space and Time to range.

The poet, in his land of dreams
Illumined by celestial gleams
From realm of golden light, that teems
With visions none may tell,

On him, to Contemplation wed,
No earthly beauty's rays are shed,
And Fancy round his charméd head
Has wove her mystic spell.

Let others praise the hunter's pride,
And all that charms the rest beside ;
To all the rest whate'er betide,
A dearer prize I see ;
A glance from one half-downward eye,
A smile divinely sweet and shy,
A whisper'd word, a stifled sigh,
Are worth the world to me.

ABSENCE

If time and distance had the skill
To keep our souls apart,
If dull Forgetfulness could chill
A lonely, exiled heart,
If Love could ne'er his path retrace
To his remember'd trysting-place
With more than magic art,
I could not brook to mark above
The star that sealed our plighted love.

If we could meet, as once we met,
Beneath that sacred star,
If jealous winds and waves could set
No unremoving bar,

I know not if thy matchless charms
Would be more dear within my arms
  Than felt as now they are;
To me thy absent beauty's pride
Surpasses all the world beside.

And since I thus can think of thee,
  I scarcely wish thee here;
The love that bridges land and sea
  Admits not doubt or fear.
Thy vanish'd grace to me returns,
Thy light of beauty softly burns,
  Thy spirit hovers near,
And absence brings a nameless bliss
To fill the loss of all I miss.

TO BARINE

MAIDEN, faithless and forsworn,
Here I bid a last farewell.
By the bier of Love forlorn
Pale Despair doth sound his knell;
Me, that once like Love was blind,
Never more thy spell shall bind.

Star, that sealest vows of love,
Hear and seal my vows of hate!
Stooping from thy seat above
Others save from kindred fate;
Let not eyes that do but slay
Scatheless keep their wanton sway.

Yet that dainty, perjured head
Shines more bright from broken vows !
Lovely lips, to falsehood wed,
Love from death itself can rouse ;
From thy fetters vainly free
Beats my heart for none but thee.

THE OLD GREY BOAR.

LET them talk of their polo, their races and 'chases,
We care not a rap for the world and its lore ;
Have done with your sweethearts and sweet pretty faces,
Come away to the home of the old grey Boar !

'Tis the song of an old grey Boar, my boys,
And we often have sung it before ;
We are up with the sun, for there's work to be done
In the chase of the old grey Boar.

All night on the villagers' crops he has fed,
And now he is tracked to his midday lair,
Where the tamarisk grows in its sandy bed,
And the high grass shakes in the sultry air.
There's an old grey Boar in the jungle, boys,
A Boar 'tisn't easy to match;
From the size of his slot, if I know what is what,
He's a pig we must gallop to catch.

There's a stir in the jungle, the beaters are raving,—
Keep back there, don't head him, hold hard on the grey,—
But see, now the flagmen are calling and waving,
And I'll lay you long odds that the Boar's gone away.

The old grey Boar's gone away there, boys,
You must ride, if you want to be in it ;
Steady, now, he's too near, give him time, let him clear,
You may go like the deuce in a minute.

Sit down in your saddle, and shorten your rein,
Catch hold in your stirrups, and drive your feet home,
All words will be wasted, all caution in vain,
When you see but his crest and his tushes that foam.
The old grey Boar's on in front there, boys,
And there's nothing in Asia will stop him ;
You must gallop your best, with your eye on his crest,
Till the thrust of the spear that will drop him.

We have galloped a league without swerving or
check,
Over nullahs and hedges and rocks in our
way ;
Of such trifles as these 'tis but folly to reck,
When the Boar in a moment will turn him
to bay.
The old grey Boar's on the charge, my boys,
And his flanks are all covered with gore ;
See the curl of his tush, drop your spear to his rush—
That was one *for the old grey Boar !*

When the sunset fades, and the jackals roam,
And the heat of the headlong hunt is o'er,
With the breeze in our faces we gallop for
home,
And we shout as we think of the old grey
Boar.

Oh, the old grey Boar's on his side, my boys,
And he'll never get up any more ;
Ten inches, no less, are his tushes, I guess,
Then hurrah for the old grey Boar !

NEW YEAR'S DAY

In the East the great Sun is uprising, and we
hail him the Lord of the land,
As he brings us awaiting expectant we know
not what gifts in his hand ;
Farewell to the Year that is ended. Shall we
welcome the one that is here ?
Who can say if the Sun that is rising shall bring
us a Happy New Year ?

Whate'er be the fate that awaits us, where'er in
the world we may roam,
In the arms of the brave is our fortress, in our
hearts will be ever our home ;

What matter the place of our sojourn, be it far
from our country or near ?
So here's to the Land of our exile, we wish her
a Happy New Year !

Though our foes may be arming against us, and
factions be cause for regrets,
Yet our faith shall be firm in the Ruler of the
realm where the Sun never sets ;
Whate'er be the clouds that may darken, through
the tempest unharmed we shall steer,
So here's to our King and our Country, we
wish them a Happy New Year !

There are those that will watch, as we're watch-
ing, the Sun that is rising to-day,
And think, as we think, of the absent, in homes
that we love far away ;

There are those that will fill up their glasses and
drink with a smile and a tear
To the health of the exiles in India, and wish
them a Happy New Year.

Though between us be leagues of salt water,
and years may have fled since our meeting,
Yet Space cannot alter our friendship, nor Time
chill the warmth of our greeting ;
Whate'er be the gulf that divides us, to our
fancy they still may be near,
So here's to our friends in Old England, we
wish them a Happy New Year !

There are those that are with us in exile, and
whate'er in the year may betide,
Be it pleasure or sickness or sorrow, we shall
meet it with them by our side ;

Let us hail them our comrades and brothers, 'tis
the time of good will and good cheer,
So here's to the friends that are round us, we
wish them a Happy New Year !

There are those that are gone from beside us,
there are those to whom greeting is vain,
Whose faces we never shall look on, whose
hands we shall clasp not again ;
Though they live in our hearts that forget not,
their voices we never may hear,
And we need not have care for their welfare,
nor wish them a Happy New Year !

A VISION OF SINGHAD

Long on this rugged steep the storm has beat,
The summer's heat ;
Long have these battled crags upheld in air
The Lion's lair ;
Long from his lair the Lion in his pride
With flashing eye the shrinking plain defied.

'Tis sweet to pause, and mark along the height
The wheeling kite,
To scent the fragrance of the jungle, blown
From depths unknown,
And muse with pleasure that is half regret
On days gone by that linger with us yet.

They linger still, and yet return no more,
Those days of yore ;
Gone the Mahratta spear, the moonlight raid
For wife and maid,
The cattle driven from the distant fold,
The blazing hamlet, and the ruin'd hold.

The long line winding, as the twilight falls,
From hostile walls ;
The whisper'd plot, the ambush in the glade,
The escalade ;
Brows knit, lips lock'd, save where perchance a prayer
Or mutter'd curse scarce stirs the evening air.

Lithe limbs that cling upon the rocky steep,
And upward creep,

Dark faces, gleaming eyes, and faintly seen
The tulwar's sheen ;
And silence, save where haply overhead
Echoes the midnight sentry's hollow tread.

Anon the challenge, and the clash of arms,
The wild alarms ;
The rousing trumpet and the tuck of drum,
White lips and dumb ;
The wail of women, and the torches' flare,
And ringing shouts that rend the frighted air.

Beneath the sinking moon the heaps of dead
Lie thickly spread ;
The foeman's hand is on the Lion's mane,
The foeman's chain ;
The captive's groan is hushed, and on the height
Descends the stillness of the summer night.

AT BRINDISI

THE fishing boats at anchor lie ;
Now fall the evening shades ;
Slow sinks the sun : the western sky
Flames for a while, and fades.

A distant bell the curfew peals,
And faintly borne afar
Across the silent harbour steals
The southern soft guitar.

Where sleeps the town beside the bay,
With vine and olive crowned,
A Caesar held his splendid sway,
An Empire's portal frowned.

To Fancy's eye, methinks, an hour
Returns from days of yore ;
The pomp and pride of Roman power
Goes forth to Eastern war.

By yonder castle's rugged walls,
Along the ancient quays,
The tramp of armèd legions falls,
The galleys ride the seas.

The Eagles flaunt against the sky ;
Before the sounding drums
The lictors bear the rods on high ;
The stern Proconsul comes !

The sun is set : the vision flies :
I sit and muse a space :
The little port before me lies :
The darkness comes apace.

The Fate, that bids an Empire fall,
To each his lot doth send ;
We go and come at duty's call,
And know not yet the end.

I sit and gaze with inward eyes,
And heart too full to grieve ;
The little port before me lies,
The gate of all we leave.

The gate of hopes we leave behind,
Of joys perchance the grave
To those that journey forth to find
A home beyond the wave.

Beyond the wave our lives are spent :
On us, an exile band,
The East, that knows not to relent,
Long since has laid her hand.

O little port, be this my prayer
For those that hold us dear,
May God in mercy rest them fair,
When we are far or near !

YOUNG INDIA

When the Tartar's fierce descendant
Heard a myriad captives groan ;
When the Moghul sat resplendent
On his throne ;

Came the Empire's bold forerunner,
Trader roving far alone,
Saw the land of Ind, and won her
For his own.

Bade the robbers cease from plunder,
Cruel slaughter, faithless guile,
Bade the land, that bowed in wonder,
Rest awhile.

Foreign Moghul, fierce Mahratta
Humbled shrank in fear and shame
At the voice that none could flatter,
None could tame.

Anarchy beyond the border
Fled with grisly Famine far;
Rose the holy light of Order
Like a star.

Peace and plenty reign in quiet,
Justice gives her calm award;
But behind the toiling ryot
Gleams the sword.

How shall discord, foe to power,
Give a budding nation life?
Shall the tree of Freedom flower,
Sprung from strife?

Chains of Custom, still unbroken,
Fetter those that slaves will be ;
Freedom only grants her token
To the free.

Shall the night of Superstition
End in Wisdom's fairer day,
Hurling Caste and blind Tradition
From their sway ?

Is the Land for ever blighted ?
Shall a Nation rise at last,
Firm in purpose, strong, united
From the Past ?

Haply may the seed be growing
Hidden in the womb of Fate ;
But the people's day of knowing
Cometh late.

Let them cease their idle prattle,
Girding at a foreign sway ;
Hardly hath the din of battle
Died away.

Let them cease their vain inveighing ;
Let the scales be fairly held,
Peace and plenty far outweighing
Wrong of Eld.

Ask ye not, in fear and wonder,
Whence the jackal's howl hath come ;
For the tiger's voice of thunder
Still is dumb.

On the surface, foam and bubble
Seethe upon the billow's crest ;
But the depths, which none may trouble,
Lie at rest.

Foam and bubble, who shall number,
Petty clamour, strife, and plot ?
For the Nation in its slumber
Stirreth not.

AFRICA

DECEMBER 1899

On thy lion-guarded throne,
Girt with many-jewelled zone,
Dark, inscrutable, sublime,
Tameless from the birth of Time,
Like thy daughter, Egypt's Queen,
Proud of soul and fierce of mien,
Nurse of beasts that crouch and slay,
And men more brutish-wild than they,
Thee the Persian ne'er enslaved,
Not Arbela's victor host,
Nor he whose haughty eagles waved
Erst o'er Albion's cloudy coast.

Land of ancient mysteries
Hidden yet from mortal eyes,
Thou to me from childhood's hour
Ever wast a name of power.
Let my wayward fancy range
Over all thy wizard reign,
Rich, barbaric, vast, and strange,
Desert, river, crag, and plain ;—
Where by Nile's ancestral stream
Pictured rock and temple gleam ;—
Where by Niger gliding still
'Mid the fever-haunted cane,
Deafening drum and clamour shrill
Urge the horrid rite profane ;—
Where the Arab, camel-borne
O'er the waste, from eve to dawn
Star-directed wanders on ;—
Where the wilder'd sailor wan

Flees aghast from phantom forms
Round thy fearful Cape of Storms.
Mighty mount and pathless brake,
Cataract and silent lake,
Forest, where the step forlorn
Finds a night without a morn,
These are thine, and thou canst tell
Tales of wonder-working spell
Of him who many a weary mile
Sought the secret springs of Nile,
And him who, pent in far Khartoum,
Fearless faced his lonely doom.

To me, when at the closing year
Came the tuneful sound of chimes,
A sterner music met mine ear,
And mingled with my musing rhymes.

Roll of drums and trumpets' blare
Yonder fill the frighted air,
Where against a stubborn foe
Leaguer'd hosts their vigil keep,
While beside them, cold and low,
Britain's best and bravest sleep.
Them no comrade's call shall stir,
Ringing shot, nor tramp of steeds;
Sound they sleep, though Danger spur
Heroes on to glorious deeds;
Sleeping sound, for them no more
Smiles the wished-for native shore,
Them no more shall fondly cheer
Greetings of the new-born year.
Land of strife! whose stony breast
Keeps those hearts for aye at rest,
Guard thou well beyond the waves
Distant yet remember'd graves,

Till the rolling year shall bring
Sweet fulfilment of the Spring,
Bidding battle's thunder cease,
Crowning Power linked with Peace.
Then shall come a nobler age,
Free from ancient hate and rage,
For our children's heritage,
Binding as by ties of birth,
Toward a common Nation's good,
Foes, that well have shown their worth,
In an Empire's brotherhood.

CAWNPUR

In Memoriam

July 11, 1857–1907

Linger and muse awhile, for little change is here ;
This is the place, the vale of death, the haunt of shame and fear ;
Linger and muse and mark the gleaming river pass,
The brazen sky, the shimmering air, the tall white-tufted grass.

This is the place of doom, where darkest shades
are near,
Where deepest grief is mute and still, and wrath
can shed no tear ;
Haggard and worn and wan, in garments ghastly
red,
The phantom shapes flit to and fro, the spirits
of our dead !

Hunger and pain and thirst, and fever's burning
breath
Long since had slain all hope of aid, save hope
of kindly death ;
See in yon grisly den, with anguish pale and
wild,
Waiting for death, their only friend, Mother,
and Maid, and Child !

Ah, bitter was their cup, and ah, the fatal day,
When one fierce fiend in human shape o'er life and death held sway!
Horror beheld aghast, and Murder veiled his eyes,
When men went forth, if men they were, to work such butcheries.

This is the place of death, unchanged by fifty years,
And still we wet the nameless grave with bitter, blinding tears;
Though graves, like grass, decay, and Time must change the spot,
Full many a fifty years shall pass ere *these* will be forgot.

Now peace be on the dead, thrice peace beneath the sod,
Unknown to us who weep their fate, how surely known to God!
Low in your grave lie still! Saith not the Lord of Hosts,
'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay'? Lie still, ye piteous ghosts!

Low in your grave lie still, ye hapless tortured souls,
Till the new Dawn shall rise to light the darkness of the poles,
Justice and Truth on earth with Mercy shall prevail,
And the great Trump in glorious might the Lord of Hosts shall hail!

FAREWELL TO INDIA

LAND of Ind, O land of story,
Listen ere I leave thy shore,
Fabled land of wealth and glory,
Land of ancient, sacred lore!
Land of promise, rich, resplendent,
Cynosure of Fancy's eye,
Land of hope, whose rays transcendent
Beacon Youth to venture nigh!
Land of wonder,
Storm and thunder,

Roaring floods and wild typhoons,
Mountains craggy,
Forests shaggy,
Burning suns, and matchless moons!
Land of toil, and land of pleasure,
Listen to my parting measure!

Where the summits snow-besprinkled
Rise along the northern sky;
Where the cities, old and wrinkled,
By the holy river lie;
Where the sandy desert stretches,
Where the fruitful valleys smile,
Where the swarthy diver fetches
Pearls by Lanka's gorgeous isle;
Where the ryot,
Patient, quiet,

Guides his oxen by the well,
Till the village
Rest from tillage
With the temple's evening bell ;
Dusky millions, toiling blindly,
Hear a voice that greets you kindly !

Land of sport, in jungle tangled,
Grassy plain, and rugged hill;
When the skies are star-bespangled,
When the noon is blazing still.
Grisly boar, and tiger stealthy !
Joys the hunter's heart has found
Worth the wealth of all the wealthy !
Spear and rifle, horse and hound,
Mates unchanging,
Never ranging

From your lord and master's side,
Comrades trusty,
Stout and lusty,
Friends unfailing, often tried !
Friends unfailing, here I hail you,
Let me perish ere I fail you !

Land of love, and land of laughter,
Balmy nights and purple skies !
Reck not of before and after,
While ye gaze in lovelit eyes !
Odours in the breeze distilling,
Born of jasmin, champak, rose ;
Youth within our pulses thrilling,
See beside us Beauty glows !
Shyly glancing
Looks entrancing

Back to eyes that smile their story,
Gently weaving,
Past retrieving,
Spell more sweet than dreams of glory;
Spell that ne'er shall cease to bind us,
Though the land be far behind us.

Hail thee now by name more bitter,
Land of exile and regret!
She-wolf, can thy stranger litter
Nurture such as thine forget?
Foster-land, whose stony bosom
Solace to thy brood denies,
Yielding from a baneful blossom
Fruit that whoso eateth dies;
Wanton Circe,
Void of mercy,

False enchantress, charmer cruel !
By thy glamour
Dost enamour
Hearts that deemed thy love a jewel ;
Hearts that sought thee fondly sighing
Break at last, and curse thee dying.

Land of sickness, land of parting,
Land of many a lonely grave !
Land that knows no balm for smarting,
Swift to slay and slow to save !
Land of drought and hunger haunting,
Death that smiteth unawares,
Land of phantoms, vainly taunting,
Mocking empty hopes and prayers !
Phantoms dreary,
Mournful, weary,

Vex our hearts for evermore,
Rising dimly,
Fiercely, grimly,
From that unrelenting shore;
Shore that ne'er can be forgiven,
Wheresoe'er my bark is driven.

Dreams, begone! The dawn is breaking;
Ends the dismal, brooding spell;
Brighter visions come with waking;
Land of exile, fare thee well!
Distant welcome sounds to greet us,
Faces loved of old arise,
Friends of youth in fancy meet us,
Greener shores and softer skies;
Spectres vanish,
Care we banish,

Yonder gleams the harbour bar ;
Hope undying
Forward flying
Turns, and bids us gaze afar ;
Homeward bound ! A truce to grieving,
Here's to Ind, the land we're leaving !

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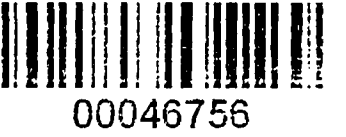
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